

Step 3 – 23-02-09

This week we will continue with the “course” on how you can set up a Party for the Animals in your own country.

You need to realise that man does not really have it in his nature to change and does not enjoy being lectured on his behaviour in relation to other living creatures.

And yet here is a reason that never before in history has a political party that does not place the most importance on the needs of people, but chooses a planet-wide approach that focuses on the needs of the weakest party, made it into parliament.

Politicians were naturally shocked when we stormed into parliament with two, nearly three seats. The other political parties were falling over themselves trying to introduce as many animal-friendly policies as they could in an effort to try and meet popular demand. The Minister of Agriculture even admitted in an interview she had passed on the task to her civil servants to “take the wind out of the Party for the Animals’ sails”.

Immediately thereafter came a plethora of small annoyances. The Christian Democrats who had to clean out an entire wing in the parliamentary building to make room for us - their natural 'enemies', left behind a trail of breadcrumbs to try and saddle us with an infestation of mice. When they heard we didn't want mouse poison being spread in our rooms, they immediately tipped off the Netherlands' largest morning paper about an imminent plague of mice in governmental buildings. Nothing could have been further from the truth. Because we didn't drop food everywhere (we were obviously tidier than our Christian Democrat counterparts) we had absolutely no trouble from mice whatsoever.

In the house, they tried to deride our mission by doing such things as whispering “Marianne, Esther, walruses are animals too, pay attention!” when they were discussing the Walrus class submarines.

The incumbent political parties were highly frustrated with our breakthrough, especially when, for the first time in history, it appeared that 80% of the first agricultural budget discussed animal rights and animal welfare. Every time the issue was debated, this theme was discussed anew.

The Christian Democrats tried to be as nice to us as they could after that, similar to a boxer who is taught that you should lean on your opponent if you can't take them on - that way they can't hit you as hard!

The provincial and Upper House elections followed shortly after the Lower House elections. We did well in both. We gained nine members of parliament in eight regional governments and one member in the Upper House. The reason we did not have two representatives was due to a member of parliament belonging to another party (GroenLinks) accidentally voted the wrong way, creating a complicated situation whereby our second seat was taken from us and given to the socialist party.

At any rate, we were able to show we were not mere flashes in the pan, nor were we any voter's “mistake” or “joke”.

BBC World service headline: “Dutch raise animal rights to new level”
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6198676.stm>



Something of which to be one hundred percent proud, but it also gives us a great deal of responsibility. We can no longer give up the position we have acquired, even though we have the ultimate goal of becoming surplus to requirements.